

CD 2009--13



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

University of Toronto Wind Ensemble
Gillian MacKay, conductor

Saturday, January 24, 2009
7:30 pm. MacMillan Theatre

08|09 SEASON

WHERE GREAT MINDS MEET GREAT MUSIC

Program

Three Brass Rings

- I For Starters
- II Mid-Riff
- III Wrap-Up

John Beckwith
(b. 1927)

Harvest Hymn

Percy Grainger
(1888-1961)

Theme and Variations Op. 43a

Arnold Schönberg
(1874-1951)

- INTERMISSION -

The Solitary Dancer

Warren Benson
(1924-2005)

Adagio Para Orquesta de Instrumentos de Viento

Joaquin Rodrigo
(1901-1999)

Baron Cimetière's Mambo

Donald Grantham
(b. 1947)

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WIND ENSEMBLE
Gillian MacKay, conductor

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Program Notes

Three Brass Rings

JOHN BECKWITH

The first movement of this work was commissioned by the UofT Alumni Association in 1984 to celebrate the installation of Dr. George E. Connell as president of the University of Toronto. The first performance, given by the Faculty of Music Brass Ensemble, took place in Convocation Hall, was conducted by Professor Emeritus Stephen Chenette. The work was subsequently recorded for CBC discs by members of the Hannaford Street Silver Band with Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducting. Professor Beckwith later wrote the second and third movement as companions to the first movement. The entire work is based upon a single tone row, inspired by the first letters of Dr. Connell's name – G.E.C. The unique spatial aspect of this piece sets the tuba as the focal point – both physically and musically. Listen for how the instruments call to each other through the space – and in the third movement, notice how they “throw” notes out to one another in a circular motion. Professor Emeritus **John Beckwith** taught composition at the University of Toronto for 38 years, and was Dean from 1970-1977. He has travelled from France to join us this evening, and we are honoured to have him with us.

Harvest Hymn

PERCY GRAINGER

Harvest Hymn is a short work by **Percy Grainger** that sat on his desk for many years – begun in 1905, Grainger did not complete it until 1932. In keeping with his usual habit, Grainger created several versions of this piece – during the 1930s he generated versions for chamber orchestra, full orchestra with piano or harmonium, string quartet and keyboard, violin and piano, chorus, solo piano, and piano four hands with solo voices and unison chorus. Grainger was a fairly astute businessman, and knew that multiple versions of popular tunes would net additional revenue from sheet music sales. This particular version was not completed by Grainger himself, but rather by Florida-based conductor Joseph Kreines, who used the multiple versions of Grainger's original as a source for his own. Like so much of Grainger's music, this music is immediately attractive – in this case

rhythmically and harmonically relatively simple, allowing the players to focus on tone, balance and blend.

Theme and Variations Op. 43a

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

Although it has traditionally been difficult to interest major composers in writing significant works for winds, there are several delightful exceptions. Notable among these are Milhaud's *Suite Francaise*, Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* and *Concerto for Piano and Winds*, Hindemith's *Symphony in Bb*, and Schönberg's *Theme and Variations*. Originally written for high school players, *Theme and Variations* is now more commonly played by university-level groups, due to the technical difficulty of the parts and the conceptual difficulty of the material. Although written in 1943, long after Schönberg had refined his serial technique, this work is fundamentally tonal. Each of seven variations (plus a finale) begin in g minor, and the work culminates confidently in G major. Each of the variations is 21 (or 42) measures in length, and follows the same harmonic progression as the theme, as well as exploring similar melodic material. At times angular and at others sinewy and sensual, this is a refined tour de force that shows a world class composer at the height of his powers.

The Solitary Dancer

WARREN BENSON

Composer and percussionist **Warren Benson** wrote some of the pivotal wind works of the last 50 years, including *The Leaves are Falling* (1963) and *The Passing Bell* (1974). *The Solitary Dancer* (1966) is a unique work for several reasons, not the least of which is that it combines a fast tempo with a soft volume level. In mainstream wind literature, fast tempi are normally associated with loud dynamics, and the challenge of this combination is significant. As always, Benson's use of percussion is active and engaging – listen particularly for the snare drum being played with fingers, rather than sticks, and the extensive use of guiro, which has a distinctive scraping sound. Benson's title refers to the image of a dancer in repose – perhaps going through a routine mentally,

brimming with latent energy that has not yet exploded into movement.

Adagio

JOAQUIN RODRIGO

One of the most successful long term commissioning projects in the history of wind bands has been the work of Robert Boudreau and the American Wind Symphony Orchestra. Created based on the instruments of the orchestral wind section, (without saxophones) this ensemble has been in existence nearly every summer for the past half century. Boudreau made a point of commissioning many major composers, and in addition to Rodrigo, requested pieces from composers such as Ned Rorem, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Georges Auric, along with Candians Healey Willan, Colin McPhee, and Harry Somers. Spaniard **Joaquin Rodrigo** is perhaps best known in North America as the composer of the famous *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar and orchestra. Although Rodrigo wrote several works for wind band, the *Adagio* is his best known and most performed work. Dreamy opening cadenzas introduce the melodic material, interrupted by an aggressive allegro. The two sections compete

for domination, with the gentle woodwind lines ultimately getting the last word.

Baron Cimetière's Mambo

DONALD GRANTHAM

Baron Cimetière is a character from Haitian voodoo lore, a spirit who functions as one of the male guardians of cemeteries. This piece is one of several works Grantham has created based on voodoo *loa* or spirits, the other two being Baron Samedi and Baron LaCroix. Baron Cimetière is said to be an unsettling character, dressed like an undertaker with a tall hat and tailcoat, wearing a set of dark glasses with one lens missing. Although the character is Haitian, the mambo is actually a Cuban dance form, which achieved considerable popularity in the middle of the 20th century. The piece is predominantly light in nature, but the darker character of the Baron emerges from time to time, at which time the music, to use Grantham's words, "takes on a dark, mordant, sinister quality." **Donald Grantham** is Professor of Composition at the University of Texas at Austin.

Notes © 2008 Gillian MacKay

Biography

Gillian MacKay is an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Toronto, where she conducts wind ensembles, and teaches conducting, trumpet, and music education. An award-winning teacher, Dr. MacKay has an active career as an adjudicator, conductor, and clinician throughout Canada and the United States. As a trumpeter, she is busy as a recitalist, orchestral player, and chamber musician. Gillian holds degrees and diplomas from the University of Lethbridge, McGill University, the University of Calgary, and Northwestern University. She has held previous faculty positions at the University of Windsor and Medicine Hat College.

UPCOMING U OF T WIND SYMPHONY CONCERT

Jeffrey Reynolds, conductor

"Celebrating Howard Cable"

Three of Dr. Cable's works will be presented in this tribute to a great Canadian musician: *Snake Fence Country*, *Scottish Rhapsody* and the recent *Good Medicine*, along with music by John Zdechlick and Eric Whitacre.

Friday, January 30, 2009

7:30 pm. MacMillan Theatre

U of T Wind Ensemble

FLUTE

Sanghee Park
Alexa Ball (piccolo)
Katherine Watson (piccolo)
Jy Hyun Goo
Mackenzie Polak

OBOE

Yee-Ting Ng
Candice Barnes (cor anglais)

CLARINET

Jong Min Lee
Sydney Chang
Charlene Lee (alto)
Ana Michelle Cruz (bass)
Kathleen Arnup (Eb)
Stephanie Geary (Eb)
Jason Chum
Joshua Phillips (bass)
Leah McGray Manning
(contrabass)

BASSOON

Dan Rutzen
Shirley Chen

SAXOPHONE

Chelsea Shanoff
Shaun Mallinen
Richard Van

Olivia Shortt
David Pitman
Robin Reid-Moran
Amy Duong

PIANO

Wesley Shen

HORN

Carlie Bigelow
Lauren Scobie
Amy Kazandjian
Samantha Aukstakalnis
Nancy Mann

TRUMPET

Andrea Vaughan
Alastair Chaplin
Jenna Howells
Michelle Wylie
Ben Promane

TROMBONE

Annemieke Vanderkraay
Stuart Bremner (bass)
Joyce McGill

EUPHONIUM

Brendan Rawlins
Devin Sloos
Leonidas Varahidis

TUBA

Eric Probst
Haley Larmar

PERCUSSION

Justin Han
Michelle Hwu (timpani)
Stefan Kitai
Andy Luck
Étienne Levesque
Brian Graiser
Will Snodgrass

BASS

Calvin Marks

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